

Inspection of an outstanding school: Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School

Bridge Road West, Stevenage, Hertfordshire SG1 2NU

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2023

Outcome

Woolenwick Infant and Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Woolenwick are happy, caring and well behaved. They are proud of their community and all the people within it. Pupils get on well with each other and show compassion and kindness.

Pupils learn a broad and interesting curriculum. They benefit from skilled teaching across the subjects they learn. All pupils achieve highly. They get a rich diet of experiences that help them understand the wider world and their place within it. Pupils enjoyed telling the inspector that the school used to be a sheep farm, hence the name Woolenwick.

All staff have the same high standards and expectations for behaviour and learning for all pupils. Pupils respond very well to this. They know that all the adults in the school will treat them with patience, kindness and positivity. This means that all pupils feel safe. Pupils understand and follow the clear school routines and expectations. This leads to a calm environment for all.

Pupils understand that their actions can affect others both positively and negatively. Adults teach this in a way that the youngest children can understand. They learn about how they can make situations better and solve problems and difficulties.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has a well-developed, aspirational, and wide curriculum. It focuses on pupils developing a deep understanding of subjects through exciting, inspiring and relevant learning experiences. The school devises learning experiences carefully. These are developed around the school's context and build on pupils' curiosity. For example, pupils learn about the school community's diverse nature, which is celebrated through stories and art. The school ensures that these experiences prepare pupils for the future. They build upon solid foundations of subject-specific knowledge. Teachers plan well-developed sequences of lessons that help pupils deepen their understanding over time. The school is

ambitious for pupils' futures. Staff ensure that pupils learn language, communication, reading and mathematics exceptionally well.

Children make a strong start to learning in the Nursery. They read familiar books and share stories through storytelling. Children develop language quickly. This means they can read, write and communicate with confidence. The early years environment is fun and exciting. It encourages children to find tasks and activities that greatly interest them. Staff are highly skilled at developing children's language, knowledge and social skills through their play.

Developing early reading has been given a high priority. Pupils use their phonics knowledge well in their reading and writing. Staff have an excellent understanding of how to teach reading well. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly. They address small misconceptions quickly. If pupils need help to keep up, this is provided. Pupils read books that match their phonics knowledge closely. They read confidently, fluently and with understanding because they know how to read unfamiliar words. Pupils love reading. They enthusiastically share their books with adults and enjoy reading together.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are ably supported and included in every lesson. Staff know pupils' strengths and what they may need to learn further. They adapt pupils' learning skilfully. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve highly and make strong progress.

Published assessment outcomes for 2022 showed that in some subjects pupils did not achieve at the same level as prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school quickly identified where pupils' recall of important knowledge was less secure and adapted some curriculum plans to improve them further. These changes were implemented quickly and have had a positive impact in helping pupils achieve very well across the range of subjects taught.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They learn the school routines quickly because all the staff teach and guide them in the same way. Pupils walk around the school calmly and slowly. In the classrooms, pupils work with patience and resilience. In the dining hall, pupils show very good manners to each other and to the staff.

The school is passionate about pupils developing a deep understanding and pride in themselves and the local community. The school is imaginative when it comes to promoting pupils' personal development. It works closely with parents and the local community to do so. For instance, pupils learn about diversity in their town by talking to different community members.

Leaders, governors and staff are a highly effective team. The school ethos is known, shared and followed by all. The school ensures that high-quality training and development enable staff to get the best out of all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in October 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	117323
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10288456
Type of school	Infant and Nursery
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Akers
Headteacher	Usha Dhorajiwala
Website	www.woolenwickinfants.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited and sample of lessons and spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of staff, leaders and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders. The inspector also met with some members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector examined a range of documents provided by the school, including leaders' school development plans and the school self-evaluation document.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and in lessons.
- The inspector considered the 62 responses and 45 free-text responses made by parents to the survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered the 21 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the 31 pupil responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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